

A N
HISTORICAL VIEW
OF THE
NEGOTIATIONS

Between the COURTS of
England, France, and Brussels,
From the Year 1592 to 1617.

Extracted chiefly from the MS. State-Papers of
Sir *Thomas Edmondes*, Knt. Embassador in
France, and at *Brussels*, and Treasurer of the
Houſhold to the Kings *James I.* and *Charles I.*
and of *Anthony Bacon*, Eſq; Brother to the
Lord Chancellor *Bacon*.

To which is added,

A Relation of the STATE of *France*, with the CHA-
RACTERS of *Henry IV.* and the principal Perſons of
that Court, drawn up by Sir *George Carew*, upon
his Return from his Embaſſy there in 1609, and
addreſſed to King *James I.* Never before printed.

By THOMAS BIRCH, M. A. F. R. S.
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Pattens* and *St. Gabriel-Fenchurch*.

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INTRODUCTION.

To the HONOURABLE

PHILIP YORKE.



IN the course of that friendship, which you have for several years honoured me with, our conversation has frequently turned upon the subject of antient and modern History, which you are master of to a degree of accuracy, unusual in an age so little advanced, and in a rank and fortune attended with so many temptations and avocations. And indeed what study, next to that of the great and unalterable principles of Morality and Religion, the basis of all sound judgment and right conduct, is more suitable than this to the higher stations of life? It has at once the particular advantage of being the best qualification for public business, and the more general one of opening

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and enlarging the mind by a thorough knowledge of mankind in all their situations, mazes, and recesses, superior to the imaginary theories of mere philosophers, and exempt from the inconveniencies, which accompany real practice, and personal experience.

But, useful and important as History is, we find our researches into it equally laborious, when truth, the soul of it, and the only foundation of solid instruction, is, as it ought ever to be, the main object of our pursuit. Ignorance, prejudice, envy, flattery, a false eloquence, and a false love of the marvellous, have at all times concurred in the misrepresentation of facts; the re-adjustment of which demands the united efforts of industry, sagacity, a modest and well-governed scepticism, and a firm spirit of candour and impartiality. Genius and abilities in the historian are absolutely necessary to the perfection of his work; but the indispensable requisite is the choice of proper materials, without which the greatest art cannot raise a superstructure of real use and duration. This is the grand article, in which the generality of this class of writers are absolutely deficient; the lower sort contenting themselves with a servile transcript of superficial and uninteresting chronicles, mingled with the current libels and panegyrics of the times; while those of greater vivacity, or petulance, hazard their groundless conjectures and opinions of the
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views and characters of persons, from whom they are at too great a distance of situation or time, to be able to form any just notions of either.

The *French* nation boasts a species of history under the title of *Memoirs*, of which we have few examples in our language: and some of their greatest men have either drawn up themselves, or furnished materials for accounts of affairs, which have passed within their own knowledge. But these, though highly useful in many respects, are in others too justly liable to the suspicion of a bias, which the writers may be supposed to have lain under, in favour of themselves, their friends, and their party. And we still want some better foundation for our judgments of events and characters.

These considerations led you, as well as myself, very early to search into the only true and unerring sources of history, the original letters and papers of those eminent men, who were the principal actors in the administration of affairs. In these facts are represented in the most artless and undisguised manner, and in the order, in which they happened; and the secret springs, causes, and motives, which produced them, are opened to view. The illustrious Lord *Bacon*, in the noblest of his performances (*a*), styles them *ad historiam pretiosissima supellex*. And his successor Bishop *Williams* observes (*b*), with great force and

(*a*) De augmentis Scientiar. L. II c. 12. (*b*) Letter to Lord *Bacon*, 31 December 1625. Lord *Bacon's* Works, Vol. IV. p. 738. edit. Lond. 1741. fol.

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propriety, that “ our historians borrow as much
 “ from the affections and phantasies of the writers,
 “ as from the truth ; and are, for the most part
 “ of them, built altogether upon unwritten rela-
 “ tions and traditions :” but that “ letters written
 “ *è re natâ*, and bearing a synchronism and equa-
 “ lity of time *cum rebus gestis*, have no other
 “ fault, than that, which was imputed to *Virgil*,
 “ *nihil peccat, nisi quod nihil peccet*: They speak
 “ the truth too plainly, and cast too glaring a
 “ light for that age, wherein they were or are
 “ written.”

The Antients, it must be owned, were wanting to themselves, in not making use of such authorities; and to us, in not transmitting them down to posterity. This defect, which is but ill compensated by the elegance and spirit of the fictitious speeches, with which their histories abound, is the more to be regretted, since we see to what excellent purposes the collection of *Cicero's Letters* has been applied by our learned friend Dr. *Middleton*, who has, by means of them, illustrated one considerable period of the *Roman* history in a manner, which does honour to our age and country. And what light might not have been thrown, by such a series of *Demosthenes's Epistles*, upon the history of *Greece* during the reign of *Philip* of *Macedon*, the invader of its liberties ; when even his *Orations*, a species of writing, that affords less
 variety

variety of facts, and more grounds of suspicion with regard to the truth of them, have, in the hands of *Tourreil* and *Olivier* (c), been highly subservient to the unfolding of the character and conduct of that wise, but ambitious Prince?

Father *Paul's History of the Council of Trent* is the first instance of a work of this kind, drawn from original evidence; which has supported it against all the arts and eloquence of Cardinal *Pallavicini*: and Time, which usually lessens the credit of other histories, has added new authority to this by every discovery, which has been since made relating to the subject of it. The performance of this great and good man has served for an example to Lord *Herbert* (whose *Life of King Henry VIII.* is chiefly form'd from our records;) as likewise to *Burnet*, *l'Enfant*, and *Brandt*; and taught the world to expect of subsequent historians a weightier attestation, than their own assertions, or the popular traditions of the times when they wrote. *Thucydides's* history deserves the character, which *Thucydides* gives to his own, of *Κτῆμα ἐς αἰς*, a *Work for Eternity*; and will be immortal, from his infinite pains in informing himself of the truth, by a correspondence with persons of all parties, and all countries, and his unbiaſſed candour in relating it. Nor could the prejudices of the religion, in which he was

(c) *Histoire de Philippe de Macedoine*: par M. Olivier, de l'Academie des Belles Lettres de Marseille. Paris 1740. 8vo.

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educated, prevail on him to justify, extenuate, or conceal, what was pretended to be done for its interest, in violation of justice or humanity ; nor the sollicitations or resentments of King *James I.* induce him to alter or soften the character of his Royal Mother, when once he had satisfied himself about it by a full inquiry among the most impartial witnesses. But *Varillas* and *Maimbourg*, once the delight of those, who read only for amusement, have, upon a due examination, sunk into neglect and oblivion ; the former pretending to anecdotes from invisible manuscripts, in order to give a sanction to his own improbable fictions ; and the latter being equally wanting in diligence and sincerity, though he saw the use of State-letters, and, in one memorable instance (*d*), has destroyed the credit of *Davila's* elaborate account of a conversation between *Henry III.* of *France* and Cardinal *Morosini*, the Pope's Legate, immediately after the assassination of the Duke of *Guise* at *Blois*, by shewing from the Legate's own letters, that he could not procure any audience of that King till three days after. *Monfr. de Voltaire's Life of Charles XII. of Sweden* will soon be upon the same foot with *Quintus Curtius*, and only be read, like his *Henriade*, for the vigour of its style, and the force and beauty of imagination, which animate it ; while the truth of his *Hero's* character and actions will be fought in the

(*d*) Hist. de la Ligue, L. III.

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more languid, but more exact narration of Mr. *Nordberg* (e). The same will, in all probability, be the fate of another *French* writer, Father *Daniel*, admired for his genius, but too indolent for an historian, who declares the study of State-papers to be a task of more fatigue than use*; and being shewn, in the Royal library at *Paris*, a vast collection of original manuscripts relating to the history of *France* from the reign of *Lewis XI.* spent a single hour in turning over the volumes, and then declared, that he was fully satisfied; intimating to Father *Tournemine*, that he did not want those old papers, *paperasses*, for his history (f); which is indeed, what might be expected from such a hand, a mere compilation from the most trivial books, in a more elegant style, and a more regular method.

The correcter and more extensive plans, which have been formed of modern history, have occasioned the bringing to light the treasures of the cabinets of several eminent Statesmen. And while *France* has favoured the world with the letters of *d'Ossat*, *Jeannin*, *d'Estrades*, &c. and *Holland* with those of *de Witt*; our nation has produced

(e) Chaplain to *Charles XII.* His Work was first published in *Swedish*, and since in *French* in 4 Volumes 4to.

* *Hist. de France*, Pref. p. LII. edit. *Paris* 1729. 4to.

(f) *Langlet de Fresnoy*, Supplement de la Methode pour étudier l'Histoire, Catal. des Histor. p. 159. edit. *Paris* 1740. 4to. & de l'Usage des Romans, Tom. I. p. 110. edit. *Amst.* 1734.

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those of *Tbrockmorton, Smith, Walsingham, Burghley, the Sidneys, Winwood, Roe, Thurloe, Ormonde, Orrery, Temple, &c.* From these, and what else may be hoped for of the same kind, the history of our country will soon be raised to a degree of perfection, which may excite the emulation of our neighbours, if a genius equal to such a task will condescend to reduce these ample materials into a proper form.

To contribute in some measure to so noble a design, at least by supplying new materials, I undertook the following work; in which I have endeavoured to apply the unpublished State-papers of some great men to the illustration of several points of our history, which have not yet been described in their due proportions. At the same time I shall have an opportunity of doing justice to the characters and merits of those men, who, tho' they served their country with equal fidelity and abilities, do not make so conspicuous a figure in our annals, as others of a more turbulent disposition, whose ambition, like the public calamities of pestilence and war, not only employed the attention, and caused the misery, of their own times, but has left lasting marks of its fatal effects for the chief theme of historians; and a warning, instead of example, to posterity. And, upon this occasion, it will be but equitable to the memory of one of the meanest of our Princes, to observe, that the Ministers employed by King *James I.* in
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foreign negotiations were generally men eminent for their talents in that kind. But his misfortune was, that their advice was seldom asked, and scarce ever followed by him ; his conduct being intirely governed by the passions and interests of his favourites, or his own pedantic and arbitrary principles.

In order to give you a just view of the present work, it will be proper to insert here some account of the persons, whose papers have furnished me with the materials.

Sir *Thomas Edmondes* was descended of a good family, different branches of which settled in several counties: but the books in the Heralds office are so defective in his pedigree (g), that it is not to be traced higher than his grandfather *Henry Edmondes*, of *New Sarum* in the county of *Wilts*, Gent. who, by his wife *Julian*, daughter of *William Brandon*, of the same county, had issue *Laurence* his eldest son and heir ; *Henry*, his second son ; and *Thomas*, his third son ; and three daughters ; *Julian*, married to *Thomas Codemore* ; *Olyffe*, married to *Alexander Good* ; and *Jane*, married to *John Vanner*. *Thomas Edmondes*, the youngest son of *Henry* above-mentioned, was customer of the port of *Plymouth* and *Foye* in *Devon-*

(g) Wood, Athen. Oxon. Vol. I. col. 472. 2d edit. is extremely erroneous in his account of our Sir *Thomas Edmondes*, whom he supposes to have been brother to Sir *Clement Edmondes*, the translator of *Cæsar's Commentaries*, and son of Sir *Thomas Edmondes*, Comptroller of the King's Household.

shire,

shire, and married *Joan* daughter of *Anthony Dalaber* of *Sherborn* in *Dorsetshire*, Esq; and by her had five sons, *Sylvester*, *William*, *John**, *Arthur*, and *Thomas*. This *Thomas*, afterwards *Sir Thomas*, was born before the year 1564, being mentioned in the visitation-book of *William Harvey*, *Clarentius*, of that year. In what school or university he was educated, does not appear; but he was introduced into public business under that experienced Statesman, *Sir Francis Walsingham*, Secretary of State to Queen *Elizabeth*; and by that Queen, who was remarkable for her judgment in the choice of men, was employed as her agent to King *Henry IV.* of *France*, in which post he continued till *June* 1599, without any other reward than the office of Secretary to her Majesty for the *French* tongue, of which he had a grant in *May* 1596. In *December* 1599 he was sent by the Queen to the Archduke *Albert* about a treaty of peace; as he was again in *March* following upon the same business. In *May* 1600 he was one of the Commissioners in the treaty of *Boulogne*; and after his return was appointed one of the Clerks of the Council; and in *June* 1601 was sent again to *France*. When King *James I.* came to the Crown of *England*, he was knighted; and in *April* 1605. sent Embassador to the Archduke

* He died unmarried at the house of *Sir Thomas Stukeley*, on *St. Peter's-hill*, *London*, 25 *June* 1635, and was interred in the Church of *St. Peter's*. Funeral Certificates in the *Heralds Office*.

at *Brussels*, where he resided till about the end of *August* 1609; and, in *May* 1610, went in the same employment to the Court of *France*, where he continued many years. His long experience, and important services, gave him a just claim to the post of Secretary of State; but he was not able to procure it, for reasons perhaps, which did him honour under so weak and corrupt an administration, as that of King *James I.*'s favourites. But at last, in *December* 1616, he was made Comptroller of the Household to his Majesty, and, in *January* 1617-18, advanced to be Treasurer of the Household; which post he held till his death. He had been chosen into the House of Commons in the beginning of that King's reign; but his employments abroad prevented him from attending there till his return home, when we find his name among the principal speakers in the Journals of that House. In the first Parliament of King *Charles I.* which met *June* 18th 1625, he sat as member for the University of *Oxford* (f); for which he was likewise returned in the next Parliament, which met at *Westminster* on the 26th of *February* following; but his election being declared void (g), he was elected afterwards for another place. In *September* 1629 he was sent Ambassador to the *French* Court, to receive *Lewis XIIIth's* oath for the performance of the treaty lately signed, by the mediation of the

(f) *Wood*, Histor. & Antiq. Universit. Oxon. L. II. p. 443.
 (g) Journals of the House of Commons, Vol. I. p. 837.

Republic of *Venice*, between the two Crowns; and with this honourable Commission he concluded all his foreign employments. In *June* 1635 he was seized with the palsy in one of his hands; but, by proper revulsions, he recovered of it (*b*); and survived several years, dying *September* 20th 1639 (*i*). He married *Magdalene*, one of the daughters and coheirs of Sir *John Wood*, Knight, Clerk of the Signet (*k*); and, by this Lady, who died at *Paris* the 31st of *December* 1614, with a character amiable and exemplary in all respects, he had one son, *Henry*, born in 1600; but whose death, in *September* 1633, was no loss to his father, as he was sunk into the most inveterate and incorrigible habit of drunkenness (*l*). He had likewise three daughters, I. *Isabella*, born at *Brussels* in *November* 1607, who had her name from the Archduchess her Godmother (*m*), and was married about *March* 1624-5, to *Henry* Lord *De la War* (*n*): II. *Mary*, married to *Robert Mildmay*, Esq; by whom she had *Benjamin* Lord *Fitzwalter*, father of the present Earl *Fitzwalter* (*o*): III. *Louisa*, born at *Paris* in 1611, and baptized on the 15th of *September*, *Lewis XIII*.

(*b*) Letters and Dispatches of *Thomas* Earl of *Strafforde*, Vol. I. p. 435. (*i*) *Peck's* *Desiderata Curiosa*, Vol. II. L. XIV. p. 18. *Wood*, *Athen. Oxon.* Vol. I. col. 472. says, that he died in *November*. (*k*) He died *September* 5th, 1610. (*l*) *Strafforde's* letters, Vol. I. p. 463. (*m*) Sir *Tho. Edmondes's* MS. *State-Papers*, Vol. IV. (*n*) Lord *Carcaw* to Sir *Tho. Roe*, 25th of *March* 1625. *Roe's* *Negotiations* with the Grand Signor, p. 371. (*o*) *Collins's* *Peerage of England*, Vol. III. p. 232. 2d edit.

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standing Godfather, and the Queen Regent Godmother, by their proxies the Princess of *Orange* and the Duke of *Bouillon* *. In *March* 1635-6 she married clandestinely one of her father's genteeler servants (p). Sir *Thomas* had with his wife the Manor of *Albins* in the parishes of *Stapleford-Abbot* and *Navestoke* in *Essex*, where *Inigo Jones* built for him a Mansion-house, delightfully situated in a park, now the seat of Sir *John Abdy*, Baronet (q).

Sir *Thomas Edmondes* was a man of uncommon sagacity, and indefatigable industry, in his employments abroad; always attentive to the motions of the Courts, where he resided, and punctual and exact in reporting them to his own: Of a firm and unshaken resolution in the discharge of his duty, beyond the influence of terror, flattery, or corruption. The *French* Court, in particular, dreaded his experience and abilities, and would gladly have removed so intelligent and severe an observer from his station amongst them: And the *Popish* and *Spanish* party there could scarce disguise their hatred of so zealous a supporter of the Protestant interest in that Kingdom. His style is clear, strong, and masculine, and entirely free from the pedantry and puerilities, which infected the most applauded writers of that age, Lord *Bacon*, Sir *Henry Wotton*, Dr.

* Journal de Regne de Henry IV. Roi de France, par Pierre de l'Etoile, Tom. IV. p. 225, 226. edit. de la Haye, 1741. (p) *Strafforde's* Letters, Vol. I. p. 523. (q) History and Antiquities of *Essex*, p. 43, 44,

Donne, &c. His letters and papers, which compose twelve volumes in folio, were once in the cabinet of Secretary *Thurloe*, and afterwards in that of the Lord Chancellor *Somers*. And it is observable, that those two great men, whose natural talents for the administration of affairs were superior to those of most others, thought the study of such collections of the highest use to themselves; and that the experience of their predecessors was a considerable improvement of their own.

SIR GEORGE CAREW, whose admirable *Relation of the State of France* is a model, upon which Embassadors may form and digest their notions and representations, and for the communication of which the public, as well as myself, are highly obliged to you, was a native of *Cornwall*, and of the antient family of *East-Anthony*; being younger brother* of *Richard Carew*, Esq; author of the *Survey of Cornwall*, and second son of *Thomas Carew* (a) of *East Anthony*, Esq; by *Elizabeth Edgecombe*, daughter of *Richard Edgecombe*, of *Edgecombe in Cornwall*, Esq; He was edu-

* *Wood*, Athen. Oxon. Vol. I. col. 452. by mistake says uncle.

(a) This *Thomas Carew* was son and heir of Sir *Wymond Carew*, of *East-Anthony*, Knight, by *Martha*, daughter of *Edmund*, and sister of Sir *Anthony Denny*, Knight. Sir *Wymond* was son and heir of *John Carew*, the son and heir of *Alexander Carew*, of *East-Anthony*, Esq; third son of *Nicholas* Baron *Carew*, who lived in the reign of *Henry VI*. *Visitation-book of Devon and Cornwall*, taken in the year 1620, by Sir *Henry St. George*, *Richmond*, and *Sampson Leonard*, *Bluemantle*, fol. 27. and Funeral Certificates in the Heralds Office, fol. 22.